

*From Information Management to Knowledge  
Management in SMEs: is there a role for the  
librarian/documentalist?*

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***Knowledge Management (KM)***

**(In search of a definition):**

“... a discipline that promotes an integrated approach to identifying, managing and sharing all of an enterprises information assets. These information assets may include databases, documents, policies and procedures, as well as previously unarticulated expertise and experiences resident in individual workers.” (Gartner Group, Inc. 1996)

## *Knowledge Management (KM)*

**(In search of a definition):**

“Knowledge is a mix of framed experience, values, contextual *information*, and expert insight that provides the framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and *information*. It originates and is applied in the minds of knowers. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes and practices, and norms” (Davenport, T. H., Prusak, L, 1998)

## *Knowledge Management (KM)*

**(In search of a definition):**



## *New modes of organizations ...*

- “Three-i economy” / Knowledge-based economy
  - information, ideas, intelligence
    - *“ An economy that adds value through information, ideas and intelligence - the Three-I Economy - offers a way out of the apparent clash between material growth and environmental erosion. (Handy, C., 1995)*
  - knowledge-creating organizations
    - *“When markets shift, technologies proliferate, competitors multiply and products become obsolete almost overnight, successful companies are those that constantly create new knowledge, disseminate it widely throughout the organization, and quickly embody it in new technologies and products. These activities define the 'knowledge creating' company, whose sole business is continuous innovation” (Nonaka, 1991)*

## *New modes of organizations ...*

- Dynamic network structures:
  - *“ Dynamic / organic networks consist of loosely connected webs of agents and brokers across industries, with a central core of staff setting strategic direction and providing the operational support necessary to sustain network”, (Barnatt, C. 1995)*
- Virtual organizations:
  - *“The virtual organization is the name given to any organization which is continually evolving, redefining and reinventing itself for practical business purposes”, (Hale, R., Whitman, P, 1997)*


## *...and new forms of work in organizations*

- **New approaches to corporate management:**
  - emphasis on the company's intellectual capital:
    - “ intangible assets created through intellectual activities ranging from acquiring new knowledge (learning) and inventions to create valuable relationships -,” (Corral, S., 1998)
    - promoting creativity and innovative thinking
    - creating a knowledge sharing environment
    - measuring the value of knowledge
    - homeworking and teleworking
    - team work and collaborative work


## *...so, what is a SME ?*

- **Size:**
  - **Small and very small**
    - isolated
    - part of a network (virtual organization)
    - subsidiary of a national, global organization Sector:
- **Business orientation**
  - information intensive / (Consulting, R&D, IT, Biotechnology)
  - less information intensive (manufacturing, “traditional sectors”)

## *The role of a corporate librarian/ documentalist*

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- traditional:
    - document collector and organizer:
      - important set of technical skills:
        - classification, coding, indexing, retrieval
  - proactive:
    - information manager:
      - professional competencies :
        - management of information resources
        - understanding the company core business
      - personal competencies:
        - communication skills
        - interpersonal skills
        - leadership
        - team work

## *New roles or different labels?*

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- Knowledge specialist
  - Knowledge facilitator
  - Knowledge synthesizer
  - Knowledge manager
  - Knowledge navigator



... Or

## A New Vision for the Profession

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